

Virginia Reentry Policy Academy Pilot Programs

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- In 2003 the National Governors Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices announced that Virginia was one of seven states selected to participate in its Prisoner Reentry Policy Academy.
- Virginia's Policy Academy project team, called the Core Group, brought together representatives of the agencies and organizations that deliver services to ex-offenders and their families.
- NGA assisted state teams in developing effective prisoner reentry strategies designed to strengthen public safety and reduce costly recidivism rates by improving pre-and post-release services.

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- Virginia Reentry Core Group met together and as sub-committees to identify the specific causes for reentry failure in the state and develop strategies to address these.
- The reentry core group identified and prioritized reentry barriers and needs.

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- **The following subcommittees were established based on broad categorizations of need or barriers to successful reentry:**

Financial Obligations, Housing and Financial and Community Resources

Family & Community Reintegration

Employment and Education

Health, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse

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- Each subcommittee identified roadblocks to successful reintegration.
- Sub-committees developed workplans and proposed actions to address those.
- Together the workplans and proposed actions form the Virginia Reentry Policy Academy recommendations.

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- **Pilot programs are being conducted in five localities.**
- **The Virginia Department of Social Services is providing leadership for the pilot programs.**
- **The pilot programs allow for testing and evaluating implementation of the recommendations of the Virginia Reentry Policy Academy.**
- **Pilot localities were selected on a volunteer basis.**

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- Directors of local departments of social services serve as the conveners for reentry councils in the pilot localities. Reentry Councils are composed of representatives of public and private agencies, businesses, community-based service providers and faith-based organizations.
- Local councils are coordinating with inmates and staff of state correctional centers to develop transition plans, identify available resources and establish methods for interagency coordination, integrated service delivery and implementation of policy academy recommendations.

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- Each pilot locality has an assigned state correctional facility from which a maximum of 75 offenders will be referred for participation in the pilot program.

Correctional Centers

Greensville Correctional Center

Coffeewood Correctional Center

Haynesville Correctional Center

Powhatan Correctional Center

Fluvanna Correctional Center

Pilot Localities

Norfolk/Greensville-Emporia

Culpeper

King G.& Planning District*

Richmond

Culpeper/Richmond/Norfolk

*Spotsylvania, Stafford, Fredericksburg, Caroline

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Pilot programs are characterized by:

- Community collaboration
- Integrated service delivery
- Connection to positive family & community support

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- Pilot program participants are provided information about services and obligations that effect them and their families during their time of incarceration.
- Representatives of the correctional facility and the local reentry council meet with the offender and develop plans for their return to the community.

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- In the 12 months following release there is ongoing contact between the ex-offender and representative (s) of the local reentry council.
- Reentry Councils develop methods for on-going communication and support for the returning ex-offender and measure the following established outcomes:

Employment

Family/Community Relationships

Housing

Mental Health/SAS

Financial Obligations

Recidivism

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- **Pilots include family to family mentoring during the re-entry process and for 12 months following release.**

- **Team Approach**

Mentor Couples or Two Person Teams

- **Family to Family Mentor Training**

Mentor Sponsor Organization

Mentor Supervisor

Mentors

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As well as relationship building and support, mentors will promote and facilitate ex-offender and family member skills building:

Fatherhood/Motherhood Programs

Parenting

Strengthening Families

Education

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- **Fatherhood/Motherhood**

Mentors will support connection of those returning to the community to Fatherhood/Motherhood programs. The goal is to improve the emotional, social, mental and physical health of children through positive father/mother involvement.

- **Parenting**

Mentors will be trained in parenting curricula to assist ex-offenders in enhancing their parenting skills.

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- **Strengthening Families**

Participants will receive training in healthy relationships to include:

Communication

Conflict resolution

Problem Solving

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■ Education

Mentors will support ex-offenders and family members in achieving education goals and facilitating communication between home and school.

Mentors will facilitate links with education resources in community– Race to the GED, etc

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■ Financial Literacy

Pilot participants and family members will receive training to strengthen skills in the management of personal financial affairs including income, financial obligations, banking, savings, consumer protection, Earned Income Tax Credit.

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- Most incarcerated men and women return to communities and to families.
- Better reentry preparation, integrated service delivery and a support system of people that care will help decrease reentry barriers and help increase the opportunity for those returning to successfully reintegrated into their families and communities and to be contributing member of the communities to which they return.